SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND MARGINALIZED PERSPECTIVES DURING QING GOVERNANCE IN TAIWAN

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Abstract. The factors contributing to the unstable and "difficult-to-govern" society in Taiwan can be traced back to the period of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). During this time, Guangdong and Fujian provinces ranked first and second in terms of social chaos, which accounted for 55% of incidents nationwide. Under the Qing dynasty's governance of Taiwan (1683-1895), officials showed little intention of governing effectively, resulting in poor administration, corruption, factionalism, and lax military discipline. This indirectly contributed to the reemergence of the hometown behavior patterns of Minnan Han immigrants in Taiwan. Several additional factors contribute to this instability: (1) The migration history has shaped the complex psychological state and cultural identity of the Han people from southern Fujian. Their "identity uncertainty" mentality has led to the reemergence of marginalized personalities and hometown behaviors, which in turn exacerbate social instability and other social issues in Taiwan. (2) The shifting political power during the Ming and Qing dynasties, particularly after 1644, triggered profound conflicts among the Han people in southern Fujian-especially among officials, intellectuals, and various social classes-regarding concepts of "loyalty," "identity," and "national identity." A crisis of identity emerged concerning whether they belonged to the Ming or Qing dynasties. (3) The development of national sovereignty in Taiwan was incomplete. During the Qing dynasty's rule, the entire population of Taiwan was not fully integrated into the national system, resulting in many Han Chinese in Taiwan lacking a sense of belonging to the Qing dynasty and a unified national identity. The marginalized identities of the Han people from southern Fujian are not necessarily passive or disadvantaged. They have navigated dynastic changes throughout Chinese history and developed survival strategies that operate within the space between the center and the periphery. However, this marginalization can easily lead to the fragmentation of national identity.
Keywords: *marginal character, homeland complex, migrant wave, border region, identity*

Introduction

Taiwan has experienced colonization by different countries and is also an immigrant society. During the Qing dynasty's rule over Taiwan (1683-1895), Taiwanese society was generally chaotic. Taiwan's geographic location, on the periphery of the Qing empire's overseas territories, reflected the Qing dynasty's laissez-faire policy toward Taiwan, which inadvertently created an unstable social environment. Officials stationed in Taiwan were often rotated and unfamiliar with the local dialects, leading to communication barriers and reliance on local clerks, which caused corruption to flourish. This pushed already marginalized groups even further to the edge of survival, fueling collective uprisings, violent resistance-such as the movement to overthrow the Qing and restore the Ming dynasty-and acts of rebellion. Furthermore, these immigrants brought with them "hometown behavior patterns." Upon arriving in Taiwan, they replicated the feuds, conflicts, and violence from their places of origin. This continuity of internal cultural divisions contributed to the instability of Taiwan's social structure. This marginalization was both external-imposed by the Qing government-and internalized by the marginalized groups themselves, ultimately leading to an unstable society in Taiwan. Immigrants, caught between two worlds-one, a homeland in which they could no longer survive, and the other, a new environment into which they could

not fully integrate-experienced a sense of displacement and a crisis of identity. This marginalization often led immigrants to exhibit extreme behaviors, ranging from passive endurance to active resistance. Understanding Taiwan's national identity issues from the perspective of marginalization highlights the interaction between structural neglect and social unrest.

The marginalization of the Minnan religion by the state

The introduction of Minnan Han people by the Dutch east India company

Historical records indicate that in 1624, during the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) colonization and development of Taiwan, the VOC were unable to persuade the indigenous population to engage in agriculture and could not import labor from Europe. As a result, they recruited and introduced Han Chinese immigrants-primarily from the Minnan region of Fujian, followed by Hakka immigrants-as migrant workers for agricultural development in Taiwan. The VOC colonial authorities regarded these immigrants as economic, transitional, and supplementary labor, with their job opportunities limited to roles in social production. Historical records indicate that in 1624, during the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) colonization and development of Taiwan, the VOC were unable to persuade the indigenous population to engage in agriculture and could not import labor from Europe. As a result, they recruited and introduced Han Chinese immigrants-primarily from the Minnan region of Fujian, followed by Hakka immigrants-as migrant workers for agricultural development in Taiwan. The VOC colonial authorities regarded these immigrants as economic, transitional, and supplementary labor, with their job opportunities limited to roles in social production.

The VOC in Tayouan (modern-day Tainan) recruited a large number of immigrant laborers from the southern Fujian province of Minnan, which was separated from Taiwan by the sea. Most of these individuals came from marginalized groups in their hometowns. Living in geographically peripheral areas, they had long been neglected by the central government and deprived of exposure to "imperial court etiquette" and the influences of central plains culture. Over time, they endured prolonged marginalization and a weakening of their political, economic, and cultural resources. Additionally, years of national warfare led to the loss of land and resources, ultimately compelling them to leave their hometowns. As a Minnan ethnic group from the borderland area, they moved from their hometown to the new territory of Taiwan. The most deeply ingrained factors in their memories were their innate ethnic identity and hometown culture (Dai, 2013). As a group that had lost their voice and power, they not only brought their labor force but also challenged their hometown culture and identity. Their behavior, lifestyle, and mental state were unique and complex, and they tended to be marginalized and disadvantaged (Gilroy, 1993).

Minnan ethnic groups marginalized by the state

The Qing rulers of China were Manchurians from the north, a nomadic people skilled in horseback combat and land-based warfare, but unfamiliar with maritime activities. Their knowledge of the empire's coastal provinces and the newly acquired territory of Taiwan was limited. China, positioning itself as a "civilized empire" with the worldview of the "Celestial empire," regarded Confucian doctrine and the Emperor as the ultimate

authority throughout its dominion. Under this lofty rule, coastal provinces on the empire's periphery, as well as the island of Taiwan-situated on the southeastern frontier-were often held in disdain. As described in The General History of Taiwan: "It is a place inhabited by barbarians, forcibly occupied by pirates, and never governed or educated by any dynasty. It is a very dangerous region." (Lian, 2024). However, Copper offers a different perspective, describing Taiwan as Taiwan had long been neglected by the Qing Dynasty and was regarded as a barbaric environment outside the pale of Chinese civilization (outside the pale of Chinese civilization) (Copper, 1990). Within this context of cultural contempt, a poet during the Jiaqing era (嘉慶年間) of the Qing dynasty (1796-1820) composed the Tragic Song of Crossing Taiwan (Common Wealth Magazine, 1991). These descriptions vividly depict how marginalized Minnan groups risked their lives to cross the perilous "black water ditch"(黑水溝) (the Taiwan strait), despite the immense dangers. Upon reaching Taiwan, they encountered additional threats, including the island's malarial miasma, desperados, corrupt officials, and headhunting indigenous peoples. Taiwan was also regarded as a "land of externalization," a place without civilization. These narratives hold countless untold stories of the blood, tears, and vicissitudes of life endured by these marginalized groups.

In 1995, Lin Wanyi noted that during the early period of Qing rule (Lin, 1995), widespread social unrest caused Taiwan to become a refuge for people from the Minnan region who struggled to make a living, as well as for anti-Qing and pro-Ming individuals. This group, intentionally marginalized by the Qing dynasty, carried with them feelings of abandonment, neglect, lowliness, self-reliance, and a lack of rights-traits that reflected a marginalized personality. These characteristics formed the core essence of early Han Chinese society in Taiwan. Beginning in 1624, successive waves of migration to Taiwan from various regions gradually formed a Han Chinese society rooted in marginalized personality traits. This society, characterized by its spiritual temperament and cultural essence, displayed shared confusion and struggles in constructing its identity-whether self-identity, ethnic identity, or national identity. These struggles were marked by a collective sense of hesitation, embarrassment, and solitude. This confusion often mirrored and exposed the Qing government's attitudes of ignorance, discrimination, and exclusion. The disparities in perception and developmental trajectories between the "central state" and the "peripheral regions" became increasingly evident. These differences triggered a series of social unrest during the Qing dynasty's governance of Taiwan, a distant frontier territory.

Migration of marginalized Minnan groups to Taiwan

Four phases of migration waves

Between 1624 and 1894, Taiwan experienced several significant waves of Han Chinese migration. Before the arrival of the VOC in Taiwan, the island was predominantly an Indigenous tribal society, with only a small number of Han Chinese and Japanese residents. *First phase of migration*: From 1624 to 1662, during the Dutch and Spanish colonization of Taiwan, the VOC sought to increase agricultural economic revenue. Unable to persuade the Indigenous population, who primarily relied on hunting, to engage in farming, and unable to import laborers from Europe, the VOC recruited large numbers of Han Chinese migrants from Fujian's Minnan region under military protection and supervision. Most of these migrants belonged to marginalized groups, marking the beginning of Taiwan's sinicization (Andrade, 2008). During this

period, Zheng Zhilong (鄭芝龍), a maritime merchant and pirate king, played a pivotal role in assisting Minnan Han people, who struggled to survive in their hometowns, to migrate to Taiwan and cultivate farmland (Clements, 2004). *Second phase of migration*: The second wave of migration occurred during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, a period marked by repeated wars that left the people in constant turmoil. Farmlands were abandoned, and frequent severe famines prompted marginalized groups in society to flee to foreign lands in search of a new livelihood. This phase was also shaped by the failed military campaign of Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga) (鄭成功) to retake Nanjing (also known as Jinling) as part of an anti-Qing alliance with the Southern Ming Yongli regime and Zhang Huangyan (張煌言) from eastern China. In 1661, following the failure of his campaign, Zheng led his forces across the sea to launch an eastern expedition against the VOC in Taiwan. This expedition brought soldiers, their families, and common people who followed Zheng to Taiwan, along with some former Ming officials and scholars. According to Jinghai Chronicles, Volume 1 (靖海紀事上卷), the total number was approximately 30,000 (Shi, 2024). In 1664, after Zheng Chenggong's son, Zheng Jing (鄭經), suffered defeat in battles around Kinmen and Xiamen in Fujian, he brought an additional 6,000-7,000 soldiers and their families to Taiwan. The total number of Han Chinese brought to Taiwan by Zheng Chenggong and Zheng Jing from Fujian was approximately 37,000. Combined with earlier migrants, the Han population in Taiwan reached around 60,000. By 1683, when Taiwan came under Qing rule, the population had grown to approximately 120,000, over 80% of whom were Minnan migrants (Yang, 2004). The Indigenous population at that time was estimated to be around 100,000 (Chen, 2010).

Third phase of migration: During the Qing dynasty's governance of Taiwan (1683-1849), particularly between 1723 and 1795 (During the reigns of Emperor Yongzheng and Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty), the lifting of maritime restrictions (海禁令) facilitated migration. This policy attracted farmers, fishermen, woodcutters, merchants, and even pirates from the Minnan region of Fujian, who were struggling due to natural disasters and widespread unemployment. In search of better livelihoods, these individuals crossed the Taiwan strait. They brought agricultural techniques, financial resources, and cultural customs from their homeland, introducing these to a fertile but underdeveloped land in need of labor (Zheng, 2016). By 1811, Taiwan's population had increased to 1,944,737. By 1895, just before the cession of Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the population had grown to approximately 2,545,731. This growth was primarily driven by migration, with natural reproduction contributing to a lesser extent. Over 80% of the population consisted of Minnan Han migrants. Meanwhile, the Indigenous population increased from about 100,000 to 150,000, with the Pingpu tribe accounting for approximately 30% of the Indigenous population (Lai, 2021).

The turbulent hometown of Minnan

Marginalized groups encompass both grassroots communities lacking economic advantages and non-mainstream groups in conflict with the national mainstream. Living through periods of national turmoil and residing in geographically peripheral territories, these groups faced marginalization influenced by spatial, historical, political, and cultural factors. To survive, their behaviors often transcended the norms typically accepted by society. After 1624, Han Chinese immigrants to Taiwan inherently carried

traits of a marginalized personality, including feelings of abandonment by the state, neglect, lowliness, disadvantage, isolation, lack of property, and a self-reliant pursuit of happiness. For these immigrants, Taiwan became a destination for marginalized groups from the Minnan-speaking coastal regions of Fujian and Guangdong during the Dutch and Spanish colonial periods, the Zheng regime, and the Qing dynasty. The Minnan-speaking regions of Fujian and Guangdong, located on the periphery of the state, were among the most chaotic areas in the country from the Ming dynasty to the early Qing period (1368-1735) (Wang, 2008). Tong (1991) in Disorder Under Heaven: Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty, analyzes various official sources in Chapter 3, "the empirical pattern," providing statistical data on incidents of rebellion, banditry, and other forms of unrest in the Ming dynasty's eleven administrative regions during its final years (1582-1644). The documented behaviors include actions such as "planting a flag and proclaiming oneself king," "attacking and killing government officials," and "gathering crowds to plunder." However, these statistics exclude incidents involving Japanese pirates and other maritime piracy. According to Tong's analysis, Guangdong accounted for 38% of the total unrest nationwide, while Fujian accounted for 17%. Combined, these two provinces represented 55% of the unrest, indicating that Guangdong and Fujian were the most tumultuous regions during the late Ming period, far surpassing other areas in the country. The people of these two provinces frequently lived amidst turmoil and warfare (Tong, 1991).

The hometown societies were plagued by wars, maritime prohibition orders, natural disasters, famines, and the constant threat of Japanese pirates, sea bandits, and robbers. Conflicts and disputes frequently arose between neighboring villages, leading to repeated violent clashes and unrest, which made survival exceedingly difficult. After the transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty, the Qing government made only limited improvements to this situation, and human-made disasters continued unabated. When Taiwan became a newly developed overseas territory of the Qing dynasty, many marginalized groups from the Minnan region saw it as an opportunity for development. Most of the immigrants to Taiwan came from these two coastal provinces (Fujian and Guangdong), bringing with them their "hometown experiences." Geographically, Taiwan, situated even farther from the mainland than these coastal provinces, was considered an overseas frontier territory, with its instability even more pronounced (Wang, 2008). For these immigrants, the primary reason for crossing the sea to Taiwan was the lack of arable land in their hometowns, making it difficult to make a living. They sought farmland as a means of survival. In their hometowns, where the geography was characterized by "eight parts mountain, one part water, and one part farmland," mountainous terrain was predominant, and flat plains were scarce. For marginalized groups, Taiwan, separated by only a strait, represented a land of opportunity: vast, sparsely populated, and rich in undeveloped land resources. These push and pull factors repeatedly attracted marginalized groups struggling to survive in their hometowns. Driven by the need to make a living, they bravely ventured across the sea, wave after wave, seeking opportunities for survival and development (Zheng, 2016).

Differences and conflicts in Taiwanese society

At the time, Taiwan’s inhabitants included Minnan people, Cantonese, Hakka, plains aborigines (Shufan), mountain aborigines (Shengfan), and a small number of foreigners. These groups arrived at different times and settled in waves, creating numerous conflicts of interest. Such conflicts extended even between villages. Differences in

language, culture, clothing, customs, values, and religious beliefs highlighted significant ethnic distinctions. These differences often reflected societal attitudes of stratification, discrimination, and exclusion. The resulting tension went beyond superficial cultural prejudice, influencing individuals' social status, economic opportunities, and political power. All these groups came to Taiwan with aspirations for a better life. However, in this new environment-shaped by diverse cultures and social, economic, and ethnic divisions-they often faced confusion and introspection regarding their identities (Sun, 2013; Gilroy, 1993). Language represents a clearly identifiable difference between groups, whether based on ethnicity, skin color, religion, or cultural traditions. For marginalized groups, this difference often becomes the first challenge they encounter when arriving in a new environment. People tend to establish a sense of belonging through linguistic assimilation. However, the communication barriers caused by linguistic and cultural differences often serve to distinguish "us" from "them." An observed that when migrants move to a new place, they inevitably bring their original language and regional culture with them. Once the migrant population reaches a certain size, their dialect and culture-both of which inherently serve as functions of identity formation-become transplanted to the new location and form a foundation for mutual recognition and shared identity.

Ernest Gellner theorized that two individuals belong to the same nation only when they share the same culture. Furthermore, he argued that nationalism does not arise from a pre-existing sense of national identity but is constructed. According to Gellner, only when individuals mutually acknowledge their shared nationhood can they be considered part of the same nation (Gellner, 2006). It is widely recognized that a natural connection exists between the language spoken by members of an ethnic group and their collective identity. Through shared accents, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions, speakers affirm their self-identity while being recognized by others who share the same linguistic traits. Individuals who integrate into an ethnic group gain not only a sense of empowerment and pride but also social responsibility and historical awareness through their use of the group's language (Gao and Lu, 2002). Thus, language is not merely a tool for communication but an integral part of culture. While ethnicity is often associated with race, it emphasizes shared cultural identities and characteristics rather than biological traits. Theories of ethnic and national identity emerged alongside the expansion of colonialism and include three main perspectives: primordialism, constructivism, and structuralism (or instrumentalism). Primordialism posits that ethnic identity is determined by innate factors such as bloodline, language, religion, or cultural traits and is therefore considered predestined. For this reason, it is also referred to as "essentialism." Constructivism argues that identity is neither innate nor merely reactive but is shaped by a group's collective memory (or forgetfulness) of the past, shared present circumstances, and collective aspirations for the future. This aligns with Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined community". Constructivism emphasizes that all identities are artificially constructed, relying on shared experiences and collective memory. Structuralism highlights how ethnic identity becomes cohesive when contact with "the Other" leads to structural discrimination, institutional oppression, or domination. This dynamic reinforces distinctions between "Us" and "Them" (Das, 1996) and serves as a form of resistance to existing social structures. Structuralist perspectives focus on how ethnic identity responds to contextual circumstances (Shi, 2004). These theories are particularly relevant to the marginalized Minnan groups, who, after enduring hardships in their turbulent homeland, migrated to

Taiwan. Their experiences reflect diverse and distinct patterns of identity formation shaped by the challenges they faced.

The Qing dynasty's lack of commitment to governing and developing Taiwan

Adopting the principle of non-action

During the Qing dynasty's nearly 212 years of rule over Taiwan (1683-1895), the first 191 years (1683-1874) saw minimal effort devoted to governance and development. This lack of attention reflected the Qing administration's laissez-faire approach to Taiwan, which can be characterized as a deliberate policy of marginalization. Coupled with the practice of rotating officials every three years, most of those dispatched to Taiwan showed little interest in its governance or development. Additionally, the imperial court avoided appointing officials from local provinces, which meant that most officials sent to Taiwan were unfamiliar with the local dialects. This language barrier made communication between officials and the populace difficult, forcing the government to rely on lower-level clerks and local administrative personnel. These clerks often exploited their positions, engaging in corruption, abusing power, perverting justice, and oppressing the people (Zhang, 2012). Such neglect further marginalized the Taiwanese population, fostering resentment and instability. As a group marginalized by the Qing government for an extended period, the Taiwanese were effectively cut off from the broader society of the nation. Having lost the right to speak and their basic powers, they were silenced. This loss of voice obscured, or even erased, their identity. The Taiwanese faced oppression by officials, exploitation by landowners, and discrimination in interactions with other ethnic groups, enduring negative and unjust treatment (Poniatowska, 1996). Moreover, the military forces stationed in Taiwan failed to protect the people. Officials focused solely on tax collection, while corrupt administrators imposed excessive levies and engaged in economic exploitation. This led to widespread public grievances, civil unrest, and frequent protests against government officials. Dissatisfied with the deprivation of their rightful resources, the people rebelled, with many emphasizing their ethnic identity in response to these challenging circumstances.

The marginalized character of Minnan Han people

John W. Mann, who explored borderline personality from an individual perspective, argued: "*Essentially, borderline personality means wanting something and not being able to get it. Certain desires can be directed toward the group, but desires can also be directed toward things unrelated to the group... Marginal dispositions are sometimes, but not necessarily, related to the group; individuals have many needs or orientations, only some of which are related to the group.*" (Mann, 1958). The Han Chinese who chose to immigrate to Taiwan did so out of poverty and an existential crisis so severe that they saw no future in their hometowns. They crossed the Taiwan strait with dreams of cultivating new land. However, upon arriving in Taiwan, they often faced significant challenges in ascending to their desired social class due to barriers such as social hierarchy, language, ethnicity, and background. Confined to low-level labor, they worked in land-related jobs that, although familiar, provided the lowest wages. They were compelled to live on the fringes of rural or urban areas, struggling to sustain their livelihoods and basic dignity while enduring discrimination from mainstream society (Kerckhoff and McCormick, 1955). In essence, these individuals found themselves

caught between two worlds that rejected them. Their homeland offered no means of survival, while in Taiwan, the government and landlords viewed them as cheap, expendable labor-oppressed, exploited, and dismissed as vagrants. The "Taiwan dream," which had sustained their hopes in their homeland, failed to provide them with a sense of belonging in their new environment. This state of being "in-between" led to an identity crisis (Mann, 1958). As a result, they underwent a process of loss, pursuit, and adjustment. When adaptation proved unattainable, many resorted to isolation, withdrawal, migration to another location, or even outright resistance. Their responses often followed a progression: starting with passive acceptance (enduring hardships), transitioning to passive resistance, and, eventually, escalating to active resistance. This active resistance sometimes involved armed conflict as they sought to assert their rightful identity and claim their place in society (Gilroy, 1993).

Replication of Minnan hometown behavior in Taiwan

The "migrant hometown behavior model" reflects the social conditions of Fujian after the mid-Ming dynasty (1449-1644), a period marked by significant chaos and frequent conflicts between prefectures and counties that often escalated into violent feuds. Economic, social, and ethnic divisions created varied marginalized circumstances for the lower strata of society. After Shi Lang (施琅) pacified Taiwan in 1683, he encouraged coastal residents of Fujian to migrate to Taiwan to cultivate land and increase tax revenue. However, he prohibited people from Huizhou and Chaozhou in Guangdong from migrating, associating these regions with piracy and fearing that their "entrenched habits" might incite rebellion in Taiwan. These restrictions were gradually eased after Shi Lang's death. While many migrants were law-abiding citizens, a significant number were individuals who had violated laws in their hometowns and sought new opportunities in Taiwan. Consequently, Taiwanese society became a complex mix of populations, including a notable presence of so-called "rogue offspring." This diversity contributed to significant social unrest in Taiwan's newly developed regions. The tendency for violent feuds or armed clashes persisted in Taiwan. Lin (2005) noted that these behaviors were inherited from the customs of their hometowns, reflecting the replication of familiar conflict patterns in a new environment.

Cai Shiyuan in the Qing dynasty, in the Song Huang Shih Yu Syun An Taiwan Syu (送黃侍禦巡按臺灣序), observed: "There are relatively few indigenous people in Taiwan; most settlers are landless vagrants and wayward youths from Fujian and Guangdong who till the soil or roam aimlessly. With its vast wilderness and mixed populace, this land proves exceedingly difficult to govern". Chen Shengshao of the Qing Dynasty was most blunt in his he Wun Su Lu II (問俗錄II): "The coastal borderlands are the hardest to govern, with Fujian and Guangdong being the most challenging. Among these, Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, Huizhou, and Chaozhou are the most unmanageable. The interior cannot tolerate them. Unable to survive in their hometowns, they crossed to Taiwan, allying with local bandits to form gangs. They engage in flattery, extortion, armed conflicts, and theft, without regard for legal punishment. Furthermore, those without land, homes, wives, children, education (lacking knowledge), or work, and dressed in rags like 'Luo Han Feet' (bachelors), drift everywhere-stealing, fighting, raising flags in rebellion, and engaging in all kinds of wrongdoing. In every direction, they form factions. They plunder civilians, abduct

women to take as concubines, engage in armed conflicts, and show no regard for official laws" (Chen, 2024).

Yao Ying (姚瑩), a military official who once oversaw Taiwan, commented on the customs of Quanzhou in Dong Cha Ji Lyue Jyua (東槎紀略卷): "Now, to flaunt strength and excel in combat, to value wealth over life-this is the custom of Quanzhou. They are fond of lawsuits, lack compassion, and seek victory without justice. Gambling dens, brothels, betel nuts, and opium dominate their daily lives, to the extent that they gamble with life itself. Such is the essence of Quanzhou, and the people of Taiwan embody these traits as well" (Yao, 2024). Yao Ying noted that half of Taiwan's immigrants were from Quanzhou, and the undesirable customs observed in Taiwan were essentially continuations of the cultural habits from their hometowns. Quanzhou natives were characterized by their love of flaunting strength and fighting, their greed, and their fearlessness of death. They enjoyed filing lawsuits, focusing solely on winning. Their habits included eating, drinking, prostitution, gambling, chewing betel nuts, and smoking opium. Among the migrants, those who found favorable opportunities often became peaceful and virtuous citizens, engaging in farming, trade, or even returning home in prosperity and honor. However, for those who failed to thrive, the aggressive and disruptive behaviors typical of their "hometown practices" naturally surfaced in Taiwan's frontier regions. These behaviors-such as raising flags, engaging in armed confrontations, rebellion, and plundering various resources-became significant factors contributing to social instability in Taiwan.

The marginalized groups who migrated to Taiwan experienced a shift in governance from the Han Chinese rule of the Ming dynasty to the Manchu rule of the Qing dynasty. This transition posed significant challenges to their national, ethnic, and self-identities. The "choice" of identity, shaped by their living environment, led to a painful struggle between psychological expression and ideological interpretation. Identity formation occurred within differential and unequal structures of identification, influenced by three main factors: the social environment, family environment, and immigration environment. When various marginalized and desperate groups united, their collective dissatisfaction fostered a rejection of the Qing government's authority, inspiring aspirations to replace it with a newly chosen "sage ruler." The process was marked by barbaric acts, plundering, fighting, flag-raising, rebellion, and other significant events, including over 70 large-scale incidents. Among the most notable were the Zhu Yigui incident (朱一貴事件) in 1721, the Lin Shuangwen incident (林爽文事件) in 1786, and the Dai Chaochun incident (戴潮春事件) in 1862. These events worsened the unstable social order in Taiwan and contributed to its growing corruption, becoming one of the defining features of the social chaos during the Qing dynasty's rule. This period is often summarized in Taiwan's history as "one small rebellion every three years and one major chaos every five years".

The mutual influence between Taiwan and the turmoil in southern Fujian contributed significantly to social unrest in Taiwan. Conversely, this unrest was closely tied to the migration of Minnan immigrants to the island. For example, in 1721 (the 60th year of the Kangxi reign), the Zhu Yigui incident led to the imposition of martial law in Zhangzhou County, Fujian Province. Rumors spread widely, prompting many residents to flee the city for refuge. In 1786 (the 51st year of the Qianlong reign), during the Lin Shuangwen incident, Yan Yan (嚴顏), a member of the Heaven and Earth Society (also known as Tiandihui, 天地會), traveled to Taiwan and encouraged Lin Shuang-wen to

launch a rebellion. After the rebellion was defeated, Lin Shuang-wen and his followers returned to Jinjiang, Fujian, to recruit additional Society members (Zhang, 1970). Similarly, in 1862 (the first year of the Tongzhi reign), during the Dai Chaochun incident, the Taiping Rebellion was raging on the mainland, diverting the Qing dynasty's attention from Taiwan. Only after subduing the Taiping forces in the Fujian and Zhejiang regions was the Qing dynasty able to gradually suppress the Dai Chao-chun Rebellion (Zhuang, 1999).

From the perspective of social psychology, two key characteristics can be identified: "social structural marginality" and "psychological structural marginality" (Stonequist, 1935). "Social structural marginality" refers to an individual's external, objective social environment or circumstances, which are closely tied to their status, role, and rights. During this period, the environment experienced significant upheaval, including the Ming-Qing transition and the overthrow of the Han-led Ming dynasty by the Manchus (a different ethnic group). "Psychological structural marginality," on the other hand, emphasizes an individual's personality traits or psychological attributes. The influence of the external environment becomes internalized at the psychological level, with its driving factors broadly categorized into three areas: the social environment, the family environment, and the migratory environment. Social environment: The broader societal context, including systemic changes and cultural transitions. Family environment: The immediate familial setting, which plays a role in shaping individual identity. Migration environment: The experience of moving from one cultural or geographic setting to another, often involving significant adaptation challenges.

It is widely believed that the formation of a "marginal personality" stems from external environmental, cultural, or group conflicts that are projected onto an individual’s psyche. This state can be understood as an internal world filled with conflict and contradiction. When a group of people leaves their original living environment and enters a new one, their inability to integrate into the new environment or culture often places them on the margins of the social structure. Over time, this marginal position contributes to the development of a "marginal personality" on a psychological level (Tang, 2019). This condition results in a fragmented sense of self-identity and social identity, leading to an unstable personality and a distinct behavioral type. A "marginal personality" emerges as a product of environmental and cultural hybridity, where an individual exists at the intersection of two entirely different environments and cultural groups. They are neither fully accepted by either group nor completely integrated into or immersed in either environment or culture. Consequently, they remain on the periphery of both groups.

Conclusion

In the above analysis, the concepts of the "edge" and the "center" are clearly illustrated. The term "margin" suggests a position relative to the "center," with marginalized groups often experiencing external realities or internal psychological states shaped by their displacement to the periphery by the "center" or the "mainstream." These groups exist in a state of presence without belonging. This condition is influenced by factors such as geography, politics, history, culture, and social class. Having left their hometowns to immigrate to a new land-Taiwan-these individuals find themselves caught between two worlds. They are acutely aware that they can no longer return to, nor fully adapt to, their original environment. As they enter

this new world, this inherently marginal group adopts an ambiguous and complex identity. Their identity encompasses the cultural heritage of their hometown, integrates their current status as immigrants, and points toward their future development within the new society. The "marginality" of immigrants is relative to their homeland. Beneath their fluid identity lies a "hometown complex," where they may wish to integrate into mainstream society but struggle to do so, or desire to preserve their original way of life and thinking, resisting change. Moreover, psychological factors are intertwined with the political and social upheavals during the Ming-Qing transition, as well as the oppression they endured under the new Qing government. This marginalization, shaped by multiple factors, naturally fostered a clearer survival mentality among these immigrants. For the Minnan Han Chinese immigrants in Taiwan, the distance they felt between these two worlds, coupled with uncertainties about their identity, created a profound sense of confusion, anxiety, and alarm. On the other hand, Taiwan offers them a new world, providing a living environment and a space for vitality where they can fully develop. Yet, this also generates a profound sense of strangeness and alienation, deeply ingrained in their experience as they endure the pain and torment brought on by inner anxiety. They constantly search for their identity-ethnic and national-while drifting away from the control of the Qing government, which fosters a growing sense of freedom. Consequently, the immigrants' sense of identity becomes increasingly contradictory, ambiguous, and hybrid, caught between economic survival and the culture of their homeland.

The "immigrant hometown behavior" is outwardly expressed as the natural transmission of the brave and fearless spirit from their homeland, which includes practices such as raise the flag and rebel, rebellion, armed conflict, and plundering resources. These uncertain and often immoral behaviors, originating from their hometown, are reflected in the individual's external social environment, closely tied to their status, role, and rights. The influence of this environment is internalized at the psychological level of the individual. For a long time, these immigrants have faced national instability, the oppression of local officials, economic exploitation, and discrimination both between and within ethnic groups. Throughout this process, they have suffered harm from negative and unequal relationships. Understanding this condition, rooted in external environmental, cultural, or group conflicts, and exacerbated by neglect or intentional marginalization by the state-reveals a situation where individuals live on the margins of two entirely different environments and cultural groups. Unable to integrate into the new environment or culture, they experience psychological conflicts regarding national identity, ethnic identity, and self-identity. This results in a chaotic sense of self and an unstable personality. The "choice" of identity, along with the environment in which an individual finds themselves, their mental representations, and ideological expressions, constitute a painful struggle between opposing forces. Identity is formed through a structure of recognition, which is based on differences and inequalities. Today, the people of Taiwan have chosen to isolate themselves from the broader society of China. They exhibit tendencies of self-marginalization and self-distancing. The factors contributing to this, along with its transmission across generations and its impact on various ethnic groups, warrant further research.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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